

# COMPLAINTS

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Ltd (TVB LEP) is committed to using its resources effectively and efficiently, ensuring that the needs of our stakeholders are our top priority. If we fall short of this commitment or something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. You can contact us electronically, by telephone or by letter; the contact details are on our website. We will, where possible, respond to you electronically, by telephone or online rather than by letter.
- 1.2 We aim to resolve the concerns of stakeholders as quickly as possible, however where this is not possible we have a complaints process to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, appropriately and timely.

## 2. What is a complaint?

- 2.1 Our definition of a formal complaint is:

**“an expression of dissatisfaction, where you feel we have got something wrong, such as: the standard of service, or the way a decision has been made, behaviours or actions or lack of action by the LEP, its staff or its partners and contractors, that affects you, that has already been reported and has not been addressed”.**

- 2.2 On receipt of your complaint, the LEP will work with you to identify your concerns and what your desired outcomes are (step one). The LEP will aim to do this within five working days, and is a vital part of the overall complaints process to ensure that we can effectively address your complaint.

### The complaint

- 2.3 Complaints will be investigated and dealt with by the LEP CEO. You will receive a full response within ten working days from the completion of step one. If we cannot respond to your complaint within ten working days we will notify you of this and let you know when we will be responding, along with the reasons why we are unable to respond to you within this time limit.
- 2.4 Our response to your complaint (step two) will include:
  - What we understand the agreed issue(s) to be
  - A chronology of events
  - If we uphold or partially uphold your complaint;
    - what we are going to do to put it right
    - when it will be put right
    - an apology (if relevant); and
    - what we will do differently to avoid or minimise the risk of a recurrence of the events that led to the complaint

- If we do not uphold your complaint, we will provide you with a clear explanation detailing the reason why we do not consider it appropriate to (uphold your complaint)

2.5 If you are still unhappy you must let us know within 20 working days from the date of our step two response. It is important that you consider our response and let us know if you wish to review our decision. If we do not hear anything from you within 20 working days we will assume that you are satisfied with our response and will close the complaint.

## The review

2.6 You will need to give clear reasons and evidence as to why you disagree with the step two outcome and what you want us to do to resolve it.

2.7 If you are not able to provide any evidence as to why the step two findings were wrong we will not be able to undertake a review. The CEO will work with you to help determine whether you can proceed through the review process (step three).

2.8 Following identification and agreement of the issue(s) to be reviewed at step three, the review will be investigated by a member of the LEP's Nominations & Governance Committee, who has not previously been involved (step four). A response will be sent to you within 20 working days (4 weeks).

2.9 The response will include:

- What we understand you think we failed to address or correct
- A chronology of events
- If we uphold or partially uphold your complaint
  - what we are going to do to put it right
  - when it will be put right by
  - an apology
  - what we will do differently now to prevent a recurrence
- If we do not uphold your complaint a clear explanation detailing the reason why

## 3. When can you make a complaint?

3.1 Complaints need to be made within six calendar months of the cause for the complaint so that we can investigate fully and fairly.

3.2 There may be times when you haven't had a chance to complain within six months. If there are exceptional circumstances (illness, changes in personal circumstances, etc), the CEO may make a discretionary decision to consider a late complaint providing you can explain and evidence.

## 4. Things to include in your complaint

4.1 Please tell us clearly and concisely by giving as much information as possible.

- What we did wrong and when?
- What should have happened in your opinion?

- What policy or procedure has not been followed and why (if known)?
- How can we put it right?
- And any other outcomes you are seeking

## 5. Anonymous complaints, whistle blowing and fraud

5.1 We will not normally investigate anonymous formal complaints but depending on the individual circumstances we may choose to do so. If we do, we will not tell anyone you have complained and will keep your details confidential. If we know who you are and can keep in touch with you, it will help us investigate things better and more quickly.

## 6. Persistent, vexatious and unreasonable complainants

6.1 In a minority of cases some complainants pursue their cases in a way that can impede the investigation of their complaint or have significant resource issues for us. This may include reasons like:

- Repeatedly not accepting the response and not providing any new evidence
- Not wanting to follow the correct appeals/complaints channel
- Repeatedly copying many people into contacts resulting in several people working on it at the same time
- Volume of contacts
- Aggressive and intimidating in style of communication
- Unreasonably chasing for responses within timeframes published.

6.2 We do not expect our staff to spend time dealing with unreasonable complainants, nor do we expect staff to tolerate threatening or abusive behaviour by complainants and we will act to protect staff from such behaviour.